

ALMOST TANGIBLE

THE LITTLE MATCH GIRL BY HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSON

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EXT. TOWN. DAY/NIGHT

WE ARE IN A BUSTLING TOWN. PEOPLE SEEM HAPPY

THE DAY PASSES IN A MONTAGE OF SOUNDS OF HORSES AND CARRIAGES
AND STREET SELLERS.

OCCASSIONALLY WE HEAR THE LITTLE GIRL SAYING 'MATCHES'

IF PEOPLE RESPOND AT ALL IT IS TO SHOO HER AWAY

NARRATOR: It was so terribly cold; it was snowing and darkness was falling;
it was also the last evening of the year, New Year's Eve.

WE HEAR LITTLE FEET SHUFFLING ON THE STREET

In this cold and in this darkness a small, poor girl walked on the
street with a bare head and naked feet; well she had certainly
worn slippers when she left home; but what help was that! They
were very large slippers, her mother had last used them, that's
how large they were,

A CARRIAGE PASSES VERY CLOSE AND FAST

THE LITTLE GIRL SQUEALS WITH FRIGHT

GIRL: My slippers.

And the little one lost them hurrying across the street when two
carriages went past so terribly fast;

GIRL: Where are my Mother's slippers?

one slipper she couldn't find and the other one

BOY: I've got one of them.

GIRL: Thank you.

BOY: But you can't have it back. Ha ha!

a boy ran away with,

A BOY STEALS ONE OF HER SLIPPERS LAUGHING AS HE DISAPPEARS

GIRL: No! That boy has stolen one of my slippers. Bring it back. Please.

THE BOY CALLS BACK MOCKINGLY

BOY: I can use it as a crib when one day I have children of my own

THE SOUNDS OF THE STREET ARE THINNING OUT AS PEOPLE HAVE
PACKED UP AND GONE HOME

There walked the little Girl on naked small Feet that were red
and blue from the cold; in an old apron she carried a heap of
Matchsticks and one bundle she walked with in her hand; no-
one had bought anything from her the whole day; no-one had
given her a coin;

WE PASS A TAVERN AND HEAR BOISTROUS LAUGHTER FROM WITHIN
MAYBE SOMEONE COMES STUMBLING OUT DRUNK

hungry and freezing she walked and looked so downtrodden,
the poor little thing!

THE WIND WHISTLES IN THE AIR

The snowflakes fell in her long yellow Hair, curling so beautifully
around her neck, but she certainly wasn't thinking of that kind of
frillery.

WE HEAR THE SOUND OF PEOPLE SINGING ROUND A PIANO FROM INSIDE A
HOUSE. MIDDLE CLASS LAUGHTER AND WINE GLASSES FROM WITHIN

Lights were shining from all the windows and in the street it
smelled wonderfully of Roast Goose, it was New Year's Eve,
yes she thought of that.

THE WIND DIES DOWN AND WE HEAR THE DRIPPING FROM A LEAKING
GUTTER FROM THE ROOF ABOVE.

In a nook between two houses, one of them stuck into the street a little further than the other, she sat down and curled up; the little legs pulled up underneath her, but she froze even more and she didn't dare go home, she hadn't sold any Matchsticks, not had a single coin, her father would beat her and it was also cold at home, they only had a roof over them and there the wind whistled through even though there was straw and cloth stuffed into the largest cracks.

Her small hands were nearly dead with cold. Oh! A small Matchstick would feel so good. If only she dared pull one from the bundle, strike it against the wall and warm her Fingers.

WE HEAR A LITTLE BOX OF MATCHES RATTLING GENTLY IN HER HANDS

She drew one out,

MATCH STRIKES AGAINST THE WALL

MAGICAL MUSIC/SOUND STARTS TO ENVELOP US

'ritsch!' how it sputtered, how it burnt! It was a warm, bright flame, like a small candle, when she held her hand around it; it was a strange Light!

WE HEAR THE HEAVY IRON GRATE OF A STOVE OPEN AND THE WARM SOUND OF A FIRE BURNING WITHIN

It seemed to the little Girl as if she sat in front of a large iron stove with polished brass balls and a brass drum; the fire burnt so blessedly, it warmed her so well! No, what was that! - The Little One was already stretching out her feet to also warm them,

THE IRON DOOR CLOSES SHUT

MAGICAL MUSIC/SOUND DISAPPEARS

THE STREET IS SILENT

--- when the Flame went out, the iron stove disappeared, - she sat with a small Stub of the burnt Matchstick in her hand.

MATCH STRIKE

A new one was struck, it burned, it shone, and where the light fell on the Wall, it became see-through, like a Veil, she saw straight into the Living Room,

SOUND OF MAGIC AGAIN

THE MUFFLED SOUND OF PEOPLE AS THOUGH A PARTY IS GOING ON IN ANOTHER ROOM

where the table was set with a bright white tablecloth, with beautiful Porcelain, and the Roast Goose steamed wonderfully, filled with prunes and apples! And what was even more glorious, the Goose jumped off the serving platter,

THE SOUND OF CROCKERY RATTLING ON THE TABLE

waddled over the Floor with Fork and Knife in its back; it came right over to the poor Girl;

A DOOR WITHIN OPENS AND A COUPLE OF PEOPLE ENTER THE ROOM LAUGHING AND JUST AS WE THINK THEY ARE ABOUT TO SPEAK

SUDDEN SILENCE

then the Matchstick went out and there was only the thick, cold Wall to be seen.

DRIP FROM THE GUTTER ABOVE

DISTANT WIND

She lit a new one.

DISTANT CHRISTMAS CAROL CAN BE HEARD BEING SUNG
'GOD REST YE MERRY GENTLEMEN'
CHRISTMAS SOUNDS. BELLS AND TINKLING ETC.
CHILDREN PLAYING

Then she was sat under the most wonderful Christmas Tree; it was even bigger and with more decorations than the one she had seen through the Glassdoor of the rich Merchant this Christmas; a thousand Candles burned on the green Boughs and colourful pictures, like those decorating the shop windows, looked down upon her. The Little One stretched both hands upwards – then the Matchstick went out;

THE BACKGROUND SOUND VANISHES
SOUND IS OMINOUS FOR A MOMENT BEFORE BECOMING UPLIFTING AND
MAGICAL AS THE CANDLES BEGIN FLOATING INTO THE SKY

The many Christmas Lights went higher and higher, she saw they were now the bright Stars,

A SHOOTING STAR SOARS THROUGH THE SKY

one of them fell and made a long streak of fire in the Sky.
"Someone is dying now" said the Little One, because her old grandmother, who was the only one who had been good to her, but was now dead, had said:

GRAN: (DISTANT MEMORY) When a start falls, a Soul rises up to be with God

A MOMENT OF STILLNESS

DRIP

MATCH STRIKE

She struck again against the Wall with a Matchstick, it glowed brightly, and in the Glow...

SOMETHING EXQUISITELY BEAUTIFULL SOUNDING. FEMALE VOCAL (NO WORDS)

...stood the old grandmother, so clear, so shining, so mild and blessed.

GIRL: "Grandmother"

shouted the Little One

GIRL: "Oh take me with you! I know, you are gone, when the Matchstick goes out; gone like the warm iron stove, the wonderful Roast Goose and the big, blessed Christmas Tree!"

MATCHES ARE TAKEN OUT OF THE BOX AND ALL STRUCK AT ONCE
AGAINST THE WALL BURSTING INTO A BIG FLAME

THE MAGICAL MUSIC/SOUND IS EUPHORIC

- and she struck in haste the remainder of the Matchsticks in the bundle, she wanted to hold on to grandmother; and the Matchsticks burned with such brightness that it was clearer than daylight. Grandmother had never been so beautiful, so big; she lifted the little Girl up onto her arm,

EPIC FLIGHT INTO THE SKY

WE HEAR THE CHURCH BELLS RINGING MIDNIGHT FAR BELOW US
DISAPPEARING AS THEY FLY HIGHER AND HIGHER

and they flew in brightness and joy, so high, so high; and there was no Cold, no Hunger, no Fear, - they were with God!

THE MUSIC ENDS AND WE ARE BACK IN REALITY

THE DAWN IS BREAKING

A SOLITARY BIRD SINGS

A DISTANT CHURCH BELL RINGS

A DISTANT COCKREL CROWS

But in the Nook by the house, in the cold Morning Hour, sat the little Girl with red Cheeks, with a smile around her Mouth - dead, frozen to death the last Evening of the old Year. New Year's Morning dawned over the small corpse, sitting with the Matchsticks, whereof a bundle was nearly burnt.

A COUPLE OF PASSERSBY SEE THE LITTLE GIRL

PASSER: She will have wanted to warm herself!

No-one knew, what beautiful things she had seen, in what Splendour she had walked with old Grandmother into New Year's Happiness.

THE END